

Boundaries

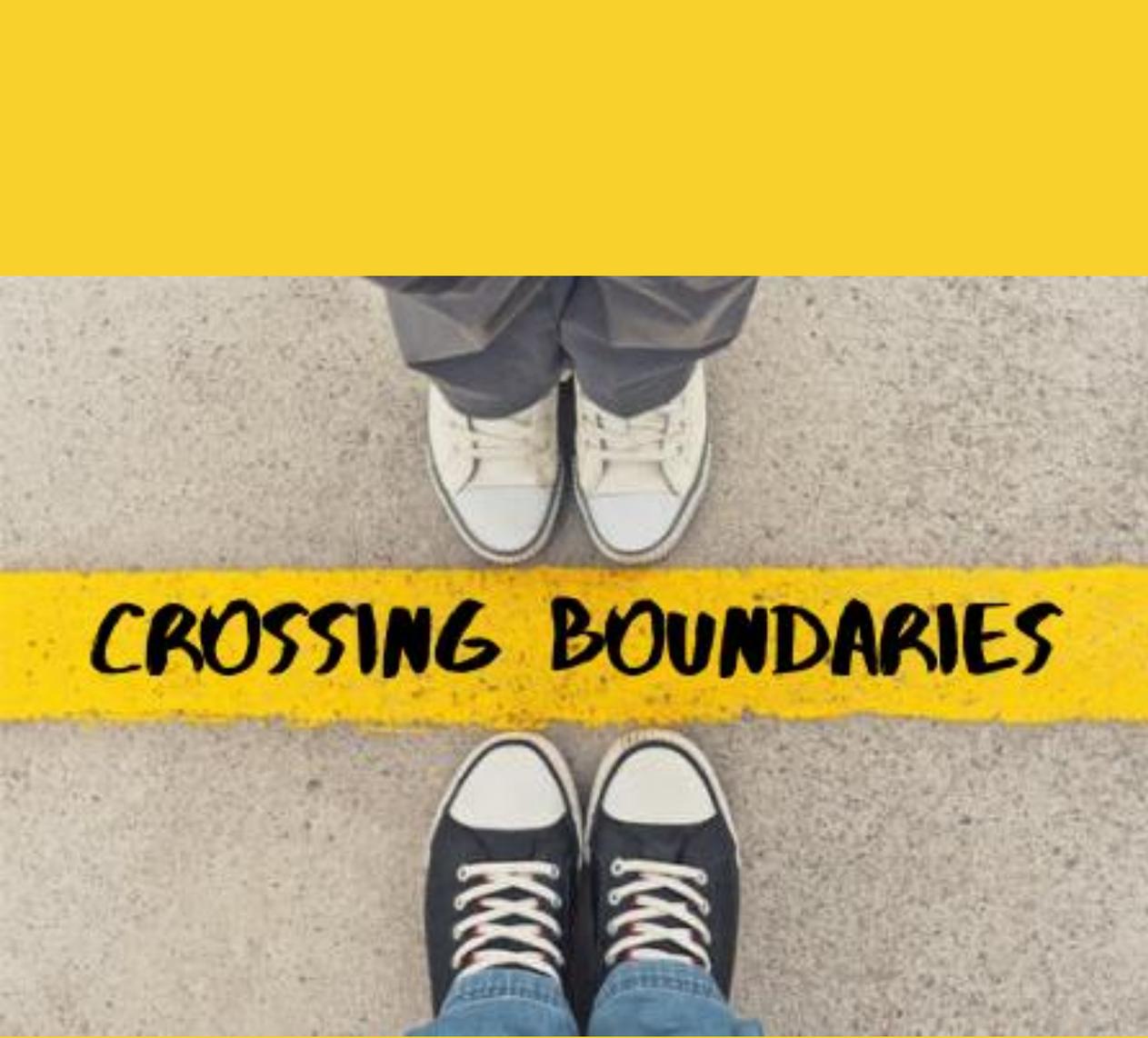
When working with clients, staff must maintain clear boundaries to ensure professional integrity and safety. Boundaries are “the limits that allow for a safe connection based on the client’s needs”

The key to managing these boundaries is understanding the difference between a professional and a personal relationship and ensuring that your behaviour always remains on the right side of the line.

Once you have allowed a professional relationship to stray into some personal areas, it is much harder for you to maintain other professional boundaries.

You and your client need to be clear that you are not literally, potentially or figuratively their friend, parent, partner or child, and it is your responsibility to ensure that this is not the case.





Crossing or Breaking Boundaries

Boundaries may get crossed at various points for a variety of reasons, whether it is simple human error, tiredness, stress, difficult situations, bad luck or just a bad day at the office. It is your job to spot potential and actual boundary crossings and to take appropriate action.

A boundary crossing is usually part of a pattern or a build-up of behaviour between you and your client. To maintain good professional boundaries, we must continually assess each situation/communication/contact and take action when necessary.

If you think a boundary has been crossed, you must let the Manager know immediately.

How to Manage Effectively

Dual relationships: You should not hold more than one type of relationship with a client, for example, they cannot work for you, be a family member or receive extra private support from you, as well as be one of your clients.

Working within your competence: It is important that you understand the limitations of your role and of your personal capabilities, and know when to refer to other professionals or to seek further support and advice for yourself and your clients.

Looking after self: It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in a fit state to do the job that you are required to do. This covers not only your behaviour outside work but also how you manage your stress and emotions within work and caused by your work.

WHAT YOU
ALLOW

IS WHAT WILL
CONTINUE



Social Media

Do not communicate with clients via Social Media.

Do not make, or accept friend requests with clients.

Do not “follow” or otherwise interact with clients outside of GBWCT approved means of communication.

You should ensure that all personal social media is set to “private” so that clients are not able to see your posts, comments, and other personal information online.

Other

Do not communicate with clients outside of work hours unless it is absolutely necessary (i.e. an emergency, or setting up next appointment/meeting)

Physical contact (i.e. hugging) should always be client led

Do not socialise with clients outside of the work environment

Do not invite clients to your home, or give out your personal contact details

Do not use overly familiar language with the client (i.e. calling them babe or hun)

Do not share and discuss your own personal experiences with the client unless there is a good reason to do so





Other Cont.

Do not transport clients in your personal vehicle unless it is for a work related purpose (like taking a client to a planned appointment during work time)

Do not spend your own personal funds to support clients' needs

Do not assist clients in your own personal time

Do not accept money, or gifts, from clients

Do not engage in the use of drugs and/or alcohol with the client, and be mindful of the discussions you have with clients about alcohol or drug use (i.e. your own personal habits)

Do not form personal or intimate relationships with clients



FAQ's

Q. What if I am already friends with someone who becomes a client?

A. Talk to the Manager about how we manage these situations

Q. What if a family member becomes a client?

A. Talk to the Manager about how we manage these situations

Q. What if the only way my client is able to communicate is via social media?

A. In some cases you can set up a social media account that is just used for client communications. Talk to the Manager about how to do this

Q. What if the only way to help someone is to break the rules "a little bit"?

A. It might feel like this is the only answer, but it often can create problems down the line. Check with the Manager about other options

FAQ's Cont.

Q. What do I do if a client communicates with me inappropriately?

A. Inform them that you need to refer them to the Manager and cease all further contact until the situation is resolved.

Q. What do I do if I run into a client at a social event?

A. This is a tricky one, keep lighthearted and professional, don't approach them, if they approach you remind them that this is not work, and that you are there as a member of the public. If you think it might cause a problem, you may need to leave.

Q. A client gave me a handmade present to say thanks, what do I do?

A. Each situation is different, there is more information in the staff handbook – also check with the Manager if you are unsure.

